

Press Release

Ellen Tordesillas, journalist from the Philippines New scholarship holder of the city of Hamburg in autumn 2020

Hamburg, October 08. 2020

For months, the corona virus has interrupted our operational routine. Therefore, we are more than happy to finally have been able to welcome our second guest of this year.

Ellen Tordesillas (73) is rightly considered a "grande dame" of Philippine investigative journalism. Since she revealed the political crimes and the shameless enrichment of the dictatorial couple Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos in the 1980s, she has critically accompanied every presidency and contributed to unveil the most important corruption and abuse of office scandals in the Philippines. The fact-checking platform "VERA Files", which she co-founded, is the association of long-standing and courageous journalists who want to promote the quality of Philippine journalism through elaborate research projects as well as training and mentoring.

"The power of the media lies in their function of publicly presenting information for debate. Only an informed public produces responsible citizens," says VERA-Files President Ellen Tordesillas.
(www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/mom/projektlaender/philippinen)

There are few other countries where so many journalists are murdered as in the Philippines. In the ranking of Reporters Without Borders, the country is ranked 136th out of 180 in terms of press freedom. Critical journalists must reckon with criminal charges, violence and even lethal attacks. The perpetrators usually go unpunished.

Ellen Tordesillas has identified the incumbent president Rodrigo Duterte as the Philippine main source of fake news. She describes the violent methods Duterte uses against critical media operators. This is why Tordesillas is considered more vulnerable than ever before. The award-winning journalist has and still is receiving death threats.

Nevertheless, withdrawal is out of the question for her. She would like to use her scholarship in Hamburg, among other things, to write a book about Rodrigo Duterte and the situation in the Philippines after years of tension.

We thank the "Reporters without Borders" and the "Journalists help Journalists" for their support.

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